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Communicative Musicality

A Cornerstone for Music Therapy

Holck, Ulla

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Communicative Musicality – a cornerstone for music therapy

Summary of the review

Malloch, Stephen & Trevarthen, Colwyn (Eds.) (2009). *Communicative Musicality. Exploring the Basis of Human Companionship*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reviewed by Ulla Holck, PhD, Associated Professor, Head of the Music Therapy Programme, Aalborg University.

With this edited book, Malloch & Trevarthen have elaborated extensively on the concept of Communicative Musicality, first presented in the special issue of *Musicae Scientiae* from 1999/2000. The concept is viewed from a broad spectrum of research areas, such as musicology, music therapy, dance therapy, psychology, child and adolescent development, psychiatry, psychopathology, anthropology, applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, neuroscience and behavioural biology.

The book's five sections focus on (1) the origins and psychobiology of musicality, (2) musicality in infancy, (3) musicality and healing, (4) musicality in childhood learning and (5) musicality in performance. When defining musicality, the editors point to the innate human abilities that make music production and appreciation possible and by choosing the word 'musicality' rather than 'music', they focus clearly on ownership, rather than only the action itself.

The many approaches to Communicative Musicality is strength of the book and a clearly an acknowledgement of the editors' own concept, since it can be investigated meaningfully within so many research areas. Due to the editors' wide perspective, some chapters investigate the very basic essence of Communicative Musicality, whereas others serve as cases of Communicative Musicality seen in practice; in music therapy, dance therapy, class teaching etc. Music therapy authors are J. Robarts, T. Wigram, C. Elefant, M. Pavlicevic and G. Ansdell.

Thanks to this extensive – and demanding – book of Malloch & Trevarthen, we can look forward to many good discussions within the field of music therapy.